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STATE OF THE TOWN ADDRESS  
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Good afternoon:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Bridgeport Regional Business Council and the Aquarion Water Company for sponsoring this afternoon's address. I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment of personal privilege to congratulate one of my predecessors, the current President of the Bridgeport Regional Business Council, Paul Timpanelli, on his selection as the Barnum Festival Ringmaster for 2014. I have every confidence that Paul will make an outstanding ringmaster and make Trumbull and the region very proud.

I would also like to recognize and welcome other Mayors and First Selectmen who are present this afternoon.

Public service is as challenging as it is rewarding. Public service is also a public trust. A Town is only as strong as the people who work for it - - those dedicated municipal employees who work to ensure that our residents receive the services that they expect and deserve.

One of the first people who came in with me was John Marsilio, our Director of Public Works. He likes to remind me that when he started with me five years ago, he had a full head of hair.

But seriously, we have been able to accomplish so much these last five years because we have a tremendous team of people that work for the betterment of Trumbull every day. I am grateful to each of them for their contributions to our town.

At this time, I would like to introduce some of our newest additions to Trumbull's government. Please join me in welcoming our new Director of Labor Relations, Jim Haselkamp and our new Chief of Staff, Lynn Arnow. I would ask all staff present today to please stand and be recognized for your hard work and efforts on behalf of the people of Trumbull.

While these last five years have been incredibly challenging, they have also been incredibly rewarding.

This afternoon, for the fifth time, I am pleased to report that the Town of Trumbull has met every challenge with a firm resolve and the state of our Town is strong. Indeed, Trumbull is the community of choice in Connecticut, as marked by our recent ranking by Coldwell-Banker as the number 1 booming suburb here in the State of Connecticut.

We have earned these state and national accolades because of our commitment to the three pillars that make a community strong - - strong finances, strong schools and a strong quality of life. When those pillars are made stronger, Trumbull is made stronger.

By virtue of the trust bestowed upon us by the people of Trumbull, we have been given the ball. And, as the

son of a coach, I am a firm believer that when someone gives you the ball, it's all about moving the chains down the field. It's about doing the job you were elected to do. It's about getting the first downs - - and you get the first downs by honoring your commitments. You score the touchdowns by turning your commitments into results.

And so we have worked hard these last five years to turn commitments into results.

Five years ago, we faced a budget deficit and a pension fund that was only funded at 27%. The financial rating agencies advised us shortly after taking office that they were prepared to downgrade our credit rating as a result of our poor pension performance. We asked the rating agencies to give us a chance to correct the problem.

So we went to work with both short term and long term goals to address the problem.

- Over the last four years, we have increased pension contributions 92% in the Town's operating budget.
- We have achieved the annual required contribution, more commonly referred to as the ARC, for pension funding for the *first time in a generation*.
- We have diversified our investment strategy and as a result, more revenue is coming into the pension fund than is going out.

- We have negotiated 9 labor agreements that now place new employees into a defined contribution plan.
- We have been able to make this investment in our pension fund without compromising Town services.
- The Town's tax rate is more stable than it was five years ago, with an average tax increase of 1.88%, among one of the lowest averages in Fairfield County.
- The Town's general fund balance is healthier than it was five years ago.
- The Town's Grand List is stronger than it was five years ago.

As a result of the collective actions we have taken, Standard and Poor's just recently upgraded Trumbull's bond rating to a AA+ - - one step away from the coveted Triple AAA. I'm proud to share that we were able to recently refinance existing debt at a savings of nearly \$1 million to the Trumbull taxpayers.

I'm often asked by our residents, "Why is the Town's credit rating so important?"

It is very simple - - achieving a AAA bond rating allows us to borrow money for long term capital priorities at a lower interest rate, meaning substantial savings to the taxpayers of Trumbull. So as we gather here this afternoon, we know we are one step away from the promise land. What will it take to get that touchdown, to



move those chains down the field to get our triple AAA?

This afternoon, I would like to share with you exactly how we get there.

First, we keep doing what we're doing. We keep the tax rate stable, we continue to grow the Grand List and we continue to promote responsible spending. We do all of that while also continuing to take on the 800 pound gorilla in the room - - the pension fund.

In 2009, given the gravity of our pension problems, we knew that we could not “invest” ourselves out of the problem. Fixing the pension fund required a holistic approach, short term and long term. We have addressed all of the short term solutions. Now we must focus on the long term.

Earlier this month, my administration requested, and the Town Council has agreed, to empanel a Charter Revision Commission. One of the charges for this commission is to implement language in our Charter that prevents this problem from happening again. The Charter Revision Commission will be tasked with developing language in the Town Charter that requires the Town to fund the annual required pension contribution (ARC) every year in the operating budget. With this action, we will show the rating agencies that we have done all that we can to correct this problem and we will also ensure that this problem never happens again.

This proactive measure is about math; this isn't about politics. This is about eliminating the albatross, rather

than kicking the can. I urge the Town Council, as they meet this evening, to expedite the confirmation of Attorney Daniel Portanova, Attorney Adam Maiocco, Daniel Shamas, Kenneth Martin, Jr., and Town Clerk Suzanne Burr Monaco, to the Charter Revision Commission so they may begin their work in time to go before the voters in November of 2014.

We can't talk about the Town Charter without talking about the Town's Code of Ethics. I believe the importance of the two go hand in hand. This afternoon, I will renew the call I made on December 2, 2013 when elected officials were sworn into office. The Town Council must work with the Town Ethics Commission to reform the Town's Ethics Code. Never again should a

town contractor who works for the taxpayers be able to say that they are not subject to the same ethical standards followed by town officials and employees. I am also asking the Trumbull Board of Education to adopt a resolution which states that they and their employees are also bound by the Trumbull Code of Ethics.

Toward that end, in accordance with the Connecticut General Statutes, I am also requesting that the Trumbull Town Council work with the Charter Revision Commission and the Ethics Commission, to develop a municipal ordinance that would allow the Town to ban contractors from bidding on municipal work in Trumbull for a previous failure to perform or where a willful violation of their contractual obligations has been

determined. This has been done in other area municipalities and Trumbull should be no exception. We need to send a message that if you perform work in our Town, you will be held to the highest standard of expectation and that the Taxpayer's interests come before any special interests.

While we are on the topic of construction, you heard me speak about long term capital priorities earlier, and nothing is more pressing or important to the future of the Trumbull Public Schools than the capital priorities of our elementary and middle schools. We have had tremendous accomplishment over the last few years in the area of education. Through a bad economy, we worked hard to avoid layoffs and to maintain class size. We implemented

full day kindergarten and expanded technology in each of our schools. We must, however, start thinking long term about our school facilities and the improvements that are needed to make them better. 5 of our 6 elementary schools and 2 of our middle schools are much older than Trumbull High School. They have been neglected for too long. Our Board of Education recently approved a reorganization plan to hire a qualified director of building facilities. This individual will work collaboratively with the Town of Trumbull to make sure we address these core priorities. This is where the Triple AAA Bond rating will become critical. As we begin to plan and implement capital projects at our elementary and middle schools, this will require the Town to borrow money to fund these

projects and we want to make sure we borrow with the lowest interest rate possible in deference to the Trumbull taxpayers.

Without question, this will be the single greatest priority for our public schools over the next ten years. These capital improvements must integrate technology into every classroom. These capital improvements must address security in every building. These improvements must include energy efficiency models in virtually every building. And most importantly, these improvements must provide environments that provide for superior teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As we examine our physical plant priorities for our schools we must also address our physical plant priorities

for Town offices and buildings. The Town's utilization of current buildings and the location of departments has never been comprehensively examined or planned; the buildings and operational locations have largely been inherited from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, when the Town's population was far less and the Town's functions were far simpler.

There is a continual need to improve general efficiency and cost effectiveness of operations. And because there are direct and indirect impacts of declining student enrollment, there is logic to consolidation of certain Town and BOE functions. We must examine consolidating Town and Board of Education offices to provide for efficiency and adjacency, while keeping in



mind how we can better deliver services to the citizens of Trumbull.

This is why I have charged the Public Works Department through our Director John Marsilio with the task of working with the Board of Education to perform a needs assessment of existing Town facilities and future demands. We need to examine if there is a better way to develop offices and adjacencies to better meet the needs of the public while centralizing government services.

The time has also come to give our seniors the facility that they deserve - - one that is centrally located and one that provides the types of programs to meet their needs. At the same time, our library needs to be brought into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Here is my vision for Trumbull, a

community center that integrates all of the components of a senior center with all of the components of a library - - a facility that is multigenerational and that brings our Town together. I am asking the Town Council to empanel a building committee to begin this process.

While we have superior finances and education, we continue to bolster our superior quality of life. Our economic development success these last several years has made our quality of life here in Trumbull stronger and we must build upon this success. Over the past year, our Grand List grew by 1.1%. This was highlighted by a 5% increase in commercial real estate development, specifically with development in our corporate park along Merritt Boulevard, a new medical development along

Quarry Road and new retail development along Route 111. We cannot stop there and we don't intend to stop there.

The Bridgeport Hospital Cancer Outpatient Center & Medical Office Building is slated for construction at 5520 Park Avenue in 2014. This 90,000 square foot outpatient center will represent significant Grand List growth for our Town and further reduce the tax burden for our residential taxpayers.

Last night, the Planning and Zoning Commission approved Trumbull Shopping Park's next high profile tenant- The Cheesecake Factory. I'm looking forward to enjoying my first meal there in fall. I'm very pleased with the overall trajectory of our mall, and have been told that

there are additional prestigious tenants that will be announced in the coming weeks.

I am also pleased to report that last night, our Planning & Zoning Commission concluded 18 months of work by adopting a new Plan of Conservation and Development for the Town of Trumbull. They are to be commended for their good work. This plan will be a useful tool to our land use and general municipal policy decisions over the next decade. The plan is available on-line and through our zoning office, but I also hope that it will be the centerpiece of a presentation at the Economic Development Commission's annual Business Appreciation Breakfast in May.

Our quality of life is also impacted by our superior public safety here in the Town of Trumbull. Our Police, Fire and EMS services provide exemplary service to our residents. The reforms we have made to our EMS over the last year have been nothing short of extraordinary. We are now covering 92% of 911 emergency calls, up 20% from last year. These resources have allowed us to reduce the amount of time it takes to arrive on scene to an emergency. Working with our first responders at the Trumbull Police Department, this emphasis on life safety has had a positive impact on the people of Trumbull this year. On three separate occasions, patients who were victim of sudden onset cardiac arrest at the time of

dispatch were provided rapid Advanced Life Support and resuscitated.

This underscores our highest public safety priority. As we have learned in recent years, seconds do matter. The immediacy and consistency of how we dispatch a 911 call impacts the public health, safety and welfare of every Trumbull citizen. While the Board of Finance has put in place the funding for a centralized communications center and a task force of the Trumbull Town Council has offered a unanimous recommendation, this year, we must finalize a centralized emergency dispatch center. Chief Kiely and I are in agreement that this is the Town's highest public safety priority and we need to get all three emergency service branches together to get this done.

There will also be anticipated turnover in our police department and we must get to work in attracting the most able and qualified candidates to join our force.

We continue to strive to bring more efficiency and accountability to government. We have hired a new labor relations director to add value to those efforts. The challenges in a unionized public sector environment to effectively manage are greatly enhanced with internal expertise. In addition, as we negotiate with our unions, we need to continue our efforts to address large cost drivers in our budget. Those efforts focus on controlling healthcare costs through plan design changes and employee contribution for those benefits. We will

continue to be fair and diligent in our negotiations with various Town unions.

The fabric of our Town is made even stronger by those residents who demonstrate their passion for our town and voluntarily make contributions of time and hard work for the betterment of our community.

At this time it is my honor to present the Clarence Heimann Leadership Award. Named after our former first selectman, this award is given each year to Trumbull residents or Trumbull employees who demonstrate leadership and self-sacrifice.

The first recipient of this award was part of what Tom Brokaw called the “greatest generation.” On June 6,



1944, this Trumbull resident was the third man to hit Omaha Beach when allied forces invaded France. Under heavy enemy fire, this Trumbullite sustained permanent physical injuries that never deterred his strong spirit. He was decorated for bravery and was a true war hero that lived in our Town. He loved his country, he loved his family and he loved baseball. We lost this Trumbullite last week, but his legacy lives on through his daughter, who has taken a lead role in handling veterans affairs for those Trumbullites who wore the uniform and served their country. The first recipient of the Clarence Heimann Leadership Award is given posthumously this year to George Burr and it will be accepted by his daughter and our Town Clerk, Suzanne Burr Monaco.

The next individual to receive the Clarence Heimann Leadership award is a dedicated Town employee who has helped Trumbull get through a very difficult period. Over the last few years, the Town has been tested and challenged with ongoing sewer construction. One man had the work ethic and the institutional knowledge to help a new administration navigate through a very difficult process. He has worked for the Town since 1989 and he recently wrote to me to thank the Town for allowing him the opportunity to serve in our WPCA Department. He described for me what it was like to get those phone calls in the middle of the night to respond to an emergency. He said, “the alarm company or the police would call in the middle of the night and off I would go to fix a problem. I

felt this responsibility the Town placed in me was most important.” You couldn’t ask for a more dedicated Town employee. This employee recently had surgery and we are all praying for his recovery. To show his dedication to the Town, one week after major surgery, he is here to accept the Clarence Heimann Leadership Award. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in congratulating Joseph Solemene.

The next group to receive the Clarence Heimann Leadership Award is a group of Trumbull residents who checked their political affiliations at the door to put kids first. What started out as an idea of holding a golf tournament has turned into a Town tradition. The First Selectman’s Golf Classic has been responsible for raising

nearly \$80,000 in the last two years to benefit student programs at Trumbull High School. This accomplishment is the direct result of those people who have contributed their time and talents to putting this event together and I would like to recognize these Trumbullites at this time. Please join me in congratulating Beth Llodra Gilman, Barbara Whetstone, Sean Carroll, Tony Timpanelli, Rosemary Seaman, Jim Blose and Ed Lavernoich.

The next recipient of the Clarence Heimann Leadership Award is a man who is a true public servant. He is currently the longest serving boards and commission member in the Town of Trumbull, where he has served as a member and Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission for 38 years, since 1976. Under

his leadership, our parks system has become a jewel that is the envy of the region and the State of Connecticut. He has served this Town as a consummate volunteer and our parks system is better served because of his leadership. Please join me in congratulating our Parks and Recreation Commission Chairman, Bob Ferrigno.

And last but certainly not least; this recipient of the Clarence Heimann Leadership award began his career in the Trumbull Public School System in 1975 as a substitute teacher. As he was substituting for a gym teacher, the football coach at Trumbull High School, Jerry McDougall, came up to the young man and asked him if he had ever coached before. The young man hadn't coached a day in his life but always knew he wanted to,

so he responded, “yes.” That answer of yes would lead to a permanent teaching and coaching position in Trumbull Public Schools, where he would serve as an assistant coach to Jerry McDougall and where they would go on to win multiple state football championships. He succeeded his mentor, Jerry McDougall, as Athletic Director in 2001. Under his 13 year stewardship, the Trumbull athletic program has earned multiple state and FCIAC championships and has seen a measurable expansion of female athletics at Trumbull High School. This athletic director was chosen by his peers to serve as President of the Fairfield County Interscholastic Athletic Conference, where he was also inducted into their Hall of Fame. This year he has retired after a distinguished 37 and a half year

career in the Town of Trumbull. Please join me in congratulating our final recipient of the Clarence Heimann Leadership Award, our retiring athletic director and the best father anyone could ask for, Michael Herbst.

As you can see, the three pillars are made strong by the people of this great community. Over the past five years of leading this Town, the title I have been most proud of was not First Selectman, but citizen of the Town of Trumbull. While I have consistently touted the importance of the three pillars, I have never really expressed what makes up their fabric. I have come to realize that while the three pillars themselves consists of thoughtful and comprehensive policies, the true strength of those pillars comes from the unified passion and

expertise of Trumbull's people - - commissioners, volunteers, employees and officials. If all of us commit to advancing that ideal, Trumbull will continue to be that very special place.

We've got some ambitious goals for the year ahead, but as I have learned these last five years, as further demonstrated by the outstanding individuals honored here today, when the right people unite for the right cause, there is nothing we cannot achieve for the betterment of Trumbull. As the placard on my desk says, it can be done.

Thank you.